

Preserve West Tisbury Subcommittee Minutes

January 23, 2021

Via Zoom: Bruce MacNelly, Heikki Soikkeli, Whit Griswold, Amy Upton, Ivory Littlefield, Sam Look.

Discussion of the sq ft. allowance

Bruce: Is 1000 sf too small if increasingly people are working out of their houses?

Heikki: you can have any portion remaining from the 3500 sf

Sam: And you can go to 6000 sf by special permit

Whit: Sam's 4500 language is too confusing. Simpler to keep accessory and residential separate

Amy: Need to be clear on what is included and what is not included to keep it straight.

Bruce: Do we want guest houses to be included explicitly in the language.

Total Living Area is a problematic term. A studio is not considered living area. You are not living in a studio or a workshop. Maybe just need a different word.

Whit: Question about 3500sf and 1000 sf accessory structures is 1000 sf enough?

Heikki: If your house is only 3000sf you would have 1500sf you can move the math around you just can't go over 3500 sf in the residential structures

Whit: No problem with 4500 sf just don't want to present that first because people will assume they can have a 4500 house, that needs to be broken into the second section that talks about additional allowance for accessory buildings.

Amy: Using our own house as an example, we are already maxed out. We don't want to penalize people.

Heikki: You are not penalizing people they just have to get a SP.

Town is likely to be sympathetic to folks coming forward for SP's who are using their space for business.

Amy: There is such a spectrum for possible use. Is the bylaw catching what we want to?

Whit: We are not going to cover every possible scenario, sometimes business will outgrow a home scenario. They might become big enough that they need to move to a place at the airport for example.

Amy: It might be nice to have a way to limit how much these businesses are expanding on these lots.

Bruce: I don't have a problem with the sf. Need to be a little clearer about what is an accessory structure and separate them from living space. Lots of people likely to be working from home with COVID related changes long term. Want to make sure we are not limiting this. Are there more folks in WT than Chilmark who work from home?

Heikki: what is the problem with getting a special permit?

Bruce: It is always discretionary. It can be a difficult process.

Heikki: Suggested moving guest houses into the accessory category. House and detached bdrm would be the only things in the 3500 sf.

Are garages that are attached counting?

Attached garage counts as an accessory structure, doesn't count at all if detached.

Discussion of detached bedrooms. What about studios like Bruce's?
Does it matter? The Board of Health will make that determination. It is going to be in one bucket or another.

Amy: What about pool houses?

Heikki: They are considered accessory structures

Amy: What about pool houses that then start to look like guest houses?

Sam: Wouldn't that be up to the PB to let the applicant know that they would reclassify the structure as a guest house if it starts to tick all of those boxes?

Whit: Still concerned about timing. Need to redraft, look at it again later today and then get it back to the group.

Heikki: Substitute Total Living Area to Gross Floor Area.

Still need to address basements

Heikki: A story that is not a story above grade plane. IRC definition. If the story above is more than 6' above grade plane. If you have more than 6 feet of basement wall exposed it is not considered a basement.

Whit: We need it very plain language about whether a basement counts or it doesn't.

Bruce: Either no basements. Or based on legal egress.

Heikki: Chilmark leaves it up to building inspector. Measure “above grade” leaves it up to the BI to determine what portion is “above grade”.

Amy: Two extremes we are trying to capture. On either end of that is the massive houses who will carve into the hillside and glaze the whole face. PB is concerned about this. And then the other end of the spectrum is basement apartments. Are we concerned about these.

Heikki: excluding non-habitable attics and below grade basements with opaque walls.

Sam: Below grade portion of structures do not count.

Bruce: Use the language from Chilmark about above grade.

Meeting Adjourned.

Minutes approved 02/02/21